

suggestions and ideas, one of which is to use our telecommunications folks, perhaps, and others, to get information and insights into al Qaeda and to radical jihadists.

Members of Congress are brought in. The current Speaker of the House was briefed four times, I believe, within the first 8 months in terms of what we were going to do, what we expected to collect and how that would keep us safe. And today, these folks are thrown under the bus.

This unilateral disarmament makes America less safe. The President has said, I'm willing to stay until Congress completes its work. I'm willing to postpone or delay a trip to Africa that's been in the planning stages for a long time so that Congress can complete its work. I'm willing to work with Congress to make that happen.

The Senate did their job. Senator ROCKEFELLER was being briefed at the same time, 6 years ago, that the current Speaker of the House was briefed. He recognizes the responsibility that they have and that the Senate has to making sure that America keeps these tools in the hands of our intelligence community. They did the right thing. Overwhelmingly, the other body passed a bill that keeps America safe, bipartisan, protecting those who helped our government to stay, to put in place the mechanisms to keep us safe over the last 6 years.

And now, the House walks away from this for the next 12 days. And each day that we are gone, our ability to monitor radical jihadists and the threats to the United States begins to erode just a little bit each and every day. But every time we identify potentially a new threat to the United States, we need to go back through a cumbersome process, one that ties the hands of our intelligence community. As al Qaeda and radical jihadists have evolved, and they're becoming more coordinated and more effective in planning attacks against the United States, we're moving back and we're degrading and we are unilaterally disarming.

It is a disappointment and a disgrace that this House is leaving today without finishing this business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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WE ARE STANDING AT A CRITICAL CROSSROAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TIM MURPHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIM MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, we are facing massive problems with regard to the price of energy. Energy costs money, and expensive energy costs jobs, and we are

seeing that now happen in our economy.

We are standing at a critical crossroad, and if we fail to deal with our energy needs in a responsible way, we will face not only the concerns about the environment, but we will face and we are facing economic recession threats and major job losses.

Earlier today, the Department of Commerce released December's trade deficit numbers, which, once again, strongly underscored the need for American energy independence. The good news is that the trade deficit shrank by 6.9 percent to \$58.76 billion. But the bad news is that energy imports continue to make up over half of our trade deficit, over half, 55 percent. In November, it was the reason why we had major increases.

We continue to see risk that oil was sold for only \$50 a barrel a year ago and gas into \$2.50, and is going to continue to climb.

As long as we continue down this road of importing foreign oil to the United States, we will be allowing OPEC nations to call the shots for our economy and becoming more dependent upon hostile countries for oil. When OPEC manipulates production, rural oil prices soar. And our President is left to go and ask Saudi leaders to produce more oil, more Saudi oil, not more American oil.

We have Venezuelan leader, President Hugo Chavez, threatening to cut off oil to the United States and Exxon. If they were to do that, the price of oil would increase throughout the world. Chavez himself predicted the cost per barrel would double to \$200 and increase our prices. Such a move would show all of these oil-producing countries that they can control our actions by shutting down our access to oil. We've already seen natural gas prices manipulated by Russia. We've seen these energy prices increase. But when we buy oil from countries with a history of supporting terrorism, the worst part about this is we are funding both sides of the war on terror.

Meanwhile, what has Congress done in the last year or two? Well, it's put on an embargo on our own oil. It's blocked exploration for American oil. Congress has voted to prevent oil production, oil drilling in the Atlantic coast, the gulf coast, the Pacific coast, Colorado and Alaska. These bans on drilling for our own oil are particularly preposterous in light of the fact that China and Cuba are drilling within 60 miles of our Florida coast while we are not allowed to drill off our coast.

The U.S. contains 70 percent of the world's shale oil reserves, enough to supply our country with energy for hundreds of years if we are allowed to use it. But rather than turning to this resource that can lead us to energy independence and energy security, we once again turn our backs to it. Last year, we cut off access to 2 trillion barrels of shale oil in the western States in the omnibus spending bill. Such policies have forced us to continue this increase of importing oil.

What happens is the impact upon the American family in terms of costs. We see increased costs for food as we also try using corn for ethanol. But when 20 percent of corn is being used for ethanol, we see the cost of food go up. We see the costs of transporting food go up. We see the cost of wheat climbing because not only is it a concern with regard to shortages of wheat coming from other nations, but it's also a huge concern on the cost of transporting that wheat. So what was \$16 per hundred weight last year for wheat for our bakers to use their flour, now it's \$40, with anticipation to climb much more.

How will Americans react when they know that while Congress continues to embargo the American oil resources, a loaf of bread is going to climb from \$1.50 to \$3 a loaf. Americans don't understand why we cannot drill for our own oil.

Yes, we need to do so many things to clean up the air. Yes, we need to make sure we are investing in clean coal technology so that the 300 years' worth of coal we have in this Nation can be used to cleanly produce electricity. We have to make sure we are using clean nuclear energy. We have to make sure that natural gas is used for what it's supposed to be as a chemical product to make fertilizer rather than producing energy at a very high cost and thereby allow us to use it for making fertilizer and other products that can help also reduce the cost of our food products.

But instead, we continue to say no to American oil, and it just doesn't make sense. Here is what America's going to face by 2050: our energy demands are going to double. That means we have 400 coal-fired power plants that need to be rebuilt and an additional 400 built. We have 100 nuclear power plants that need to be rebuilt because they are old, and we need to build an additional 100.

That means starting in the year 2010, we have to open up a new clean coal power plant every 2½ weeks and a nuclear plant every 2½ months, and we haven't even started building them yet. It cannot be done. Instead, what we are probably going to face is rolling brownouts because the efforts we are doing are not going to suffice.

I hope this House will move forward, take the embargoes off coal, and begin to really move towards clean coal technology and stop the embargo on oil.

THE WHITE FLAG OF SURRENDER?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, it's 4:14 p.m. on the 14th day of the second month of this year. This House is basically empty except for a few of us. Everyone has gone home.

We found time today to do important business for the people of the country.